

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
September 16, 2008

Budget Committee Members Present:

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman  
Michael Plouffe, Vice-Chairman  
Richard Nichols, Selectman Representative  
Rusty Bridle, School Board Representative  
June White, Precinct Representative  
Pat Collins  
Victor DeMarco  
Dick Hansen  
Eileen Latimer  
Jack Lessard  
Michael Pierce  
Norman Silberdick  
Larry Stuker  
Peter Traynor

Excused

Maury Friedman

Chairman Woolsey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Chairman Woolsey introduced the members of the Committee

**Approval of Minutes – June 17, 2008**

**Moved** by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. Lessard, to approve the Minutes of June 17, 2008.

**Vote:** 13 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions (Collins, White). Motion passed.

**Approval of Minutes – July 15, 2008**

**Moved** by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. Lessard, to approve the Minutes of July 17, 2008.

**Vote:** 7 yes, 0 no, 7 abstentions (Bridle, Collins, DeMarco, Latimer, Silberdick, Traynor, White). Motion passed.

Chairman Woolsey said this meeting was the annual review of the Hampton School District with the School Board. The prior year closed on June 30<sup>th</sup>, so this is a good time.

Chairman Woolsey welcomed Jim Gaylord, Superintendent, and Sandra Nickerson, Chairman of the Hampton School Board.

Mr. Gaylord said they had a good year and will be returning to the Town \$419,431 to offset taxes. Salaries were \$223,331 below budget for fiscal year 2008. Employee benefits were below budget by \$286,380. Out of district tuition costs were \$208,000 under budget and transportation costs were down \$45,917.

Mr. Gaylord said the overall picture was good for this year, but next year may be different. The district is in the third year of the teacher contract and will also be entering into a new bus contract. Oil prices are high. This will have to be a fiscally responsible year more than ever.

Mr. Gaylord thanked the School Sub-Committee (Latimer, Pierce, Silberdick) for their time going over the school budget. This was a very fine process and everyone will benefit. This is something that should be repeated in the future.

Chairman Woolsey said everyone appreciates the efforts of the Sub-Committee. This is a good bridge. She said she recommends this be continued.

Mr. Gaylord said that Dr. Lord will be taking over the budget and the presentation to the Budget Committee after this year.

Mr. Gaylord said that when a contract is negotiated in SAU21, each board must pass on the contract. Once it has passed all the boards, it is on the warrant and must pass in all districts.

Chairman Woolsey asked about full-time kindergarten. Ms. Nickerson said there are 147 students. Chairman Woolsey asked how the children are adapting. Ms. Nickerson said they seem to be doing well and there is only one child who is half day.

Mr. Silberdick said he would like to thank the School Board for helping the Sub-Committee understand how the school budget is put together. The Sub-Committee went through a learning curve and this meant a lot. Mr. Silberdick said he looks forward to learning more.

Mr. DeMarco said he was impressed with what the School Board has done and is confident the budget will be great.

Mr. Traynor thanked Mr. Gaylord for his presentation and asked about contracts. Mr. Gaylord said there are two contracts within SAU21. Everything is covered by the National Education Association.

Mr. Traynor asked if all six towns have to approve a contract. Mr. Gaylord replied that they do.

Mr. Pierce said the Sub-Committee had an interesting experience going through the budget. Mr. Pierce said the Budget Committee was not doing it justice. He suggested that this same concept be pursued in the future and the membership could rotate throughout the Budget Committee.

Ms. Latimer said the Sub-Committee came to the School Board with a lot of questions and did get educated. There were weekly meetings and every facet of the budget was looked at. Ms. Latimer said she could see no way to “pull the belt tighter” on this budget. She thanked the School Board for accommodating the Sub-Committee with such a great attitude.

Mr. Bridle said he, as a new School Board member, sat through some meetings and learned a lot. Mr. Bridle inquired about the bulk buying of utilities.

Mr. Gaylord said they had been able to lock in a price on oil and electricity. They have been looking at copiers and paper. They also got a good deal on computers.

Chairman Woolsey asked if the school is exempt from taxes on oil. Mr. Gaylord said it was.

Chairman Woolsey asked if they had looked at wind power. Mr. Gaylord said they are investigating this. It will be an educational tool and will be located behind the building at Winnacunnet looking towards the soccer field. They are also investigating solar panels.

Mr. Hansen said he appreciated the School Board’s presentation and past cooperation with the Budget Committee.

Mr. Stuker thanked Mr. Gaylord for the presentation. He also thanked Ms. Latimer, Mr. Pierce and Mr. Silberdick for their work on the Sub-Committee.

Chairman Woolsey introduced June White, the Precinct Representative. Ms. White said it was a pleasure to be at the meeting.

Mr. Nichols said that last year he made a suggestion that a strategy should be looked at about declining enrollements and asked what the status was. Mr. Gaylord said it is hard

to predict numbers. This year there is an enrollment of 147 in kindergarten. This may be a blip, but at this point there is not a declining population. There are other things that affect cost per student. The \$28 million bond is added into cost per student. From 2004 there have been two one-year contracts and one 3-year contract that have had a major impact on cost per student. Gas, oil and electricity are also added in. This is multi-faceted.

Mr. Nichols said he felt an increase from \$8,000 per student to \$15,000 over a 7-year period is extraordinary and he didn't feel that there is a plan to account for declining enrollment and finding ways to save money.

Ms. Latimer said the Sub-Committee focused very much on enrollment numbers. They found it very streamlined and that the numbers are actually going the other direction. The Sub-Committee's questions were answered. Ms. Latimer said Mr. Gaylord had answered these questions. Mr. Nichols said they had not been answered to his satisfaction.

Mr. Plouffe said it was admirable that \$419,000 will be turned back to the Town this year. He said the School Board always tries to put a budget together which will meet the needs of the Town and the School Board should be commended.

Chairman Woolsey asked about recycling programs in the schools. Mr. Gaylord said everyone is trying to make this a success.

Chairman Woolsey said that because of the economic situation revenues may decrease and this should be factored in.

Mr. Pierce asked why a publicist has been hired by the School Board. Mr. Gaylord said the newspapers don't come looking for good stories. They look for headlines. So to get good things in the paper, it is necessary to publicize. Mr. Pierce asked if there will be a benefit from having the publicist. Mr. Gaylord said the publicist's salary is a pittance in relation to the good will generated. Mr. Collins said he commended the School Board for finding a way to get information out to the public. Mr. Stuker said the better the school system is publicized, the better it is for the Town. Chairman Woolsey said she felt Channel 22 also does a great job in this regard.

Mr. Silberdick said that the Sub-Committee learned a lot in their discussions about Special Education. Numbers for this are very unpredictable. It is a total wild card.

Ms. Nickerson said the School Board appreciated working with the Sub-Committee. She said this was her 17<sup>th</sup> year on the School Board and she has always enjoyed working with the Budget Committee. It is the Budget Committee's job to ask questions.

Mr. Pierce said the Sub-Committee went through the school budget line by line. It was interesting and the members learned a lot. Everyone at the school was very cooperative. Mr. Pierce said the Sub-Committee had been invited to attend their actual budget process.

Chairman Woolsey recommended continuing this Sub-Committee and each year leaving one person on the committee and adding two others. This would be a good rotation.

### **Selectman Report**

Mr. Nichols said the budget would be reviewed on September 29<sup>th</sup>. They will have all Selectman sponsored warrant articles at that time. The Selectmen have proposed a \$350,000 warrant for the fire station. The Manager has also proposed a new trash ordinance. If approved, the Selectmen could have mandatory recycling. This ordinance should be on the website sometime this week. There will also be public input sessions.

Mr. DeMarco said the Town's contract at the beach is up next year. He asked Ms. White if she could get back to the Committee at the next meeting on what the Commissioners plan to do.

Regarding the uptown fire station, Chairman Woolsey said she was concerned about putting money for an architectural study in a warrant article rather than in the budget because if the article was turned down, nothing could be done. Chairman Woolsey recommended that the Committee hold the planning line in the Fire Department budget with \$1 and wait for the proposal from the Board of Selectmen and proceed from there. It is necessary to have an architect's plan and a specific dollar amount. Chairman Woolsey also said that whatever bond results from that plan, it should include the demolition of the old Town Hall because that burden should not be put on the taxpayers all at one time.

Chairman Woolsey said the next meeting on October 21<sup>st</sup> will be a discussion of the Library. Amanda Cooper, the new Librarian, will be present.

Chairman Woolsey said she had asked Mike Schwotzer for an increase to \$2,200 for the Budget Committee due to increase in advertising costs.

Ms. Latimer said she would like some discussion on impact fees. Chairman Woolsey said she will ask the Planning Board to come in and give the Committee some insight.

Chairman Woolsey asked the members to please make a serious effort to attend all meetings this year.

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**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Lessard **moved**, seconded by Mr. Hansen, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice  
Secretary

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Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman